A

SERMON

Concerning the

Excellency and Usefulness

OF THE

Common-Prayer.

Preached by

William Beveridge, D. D. Rector of St. *Peters Cornhil*, *London*, at the Opening of the said Parish Church, the 27*th*. of *November*, 1681.

The Eleventh Edition.

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To the Right Reverend Father in God *Henry* Lord Bishop of *London*, one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council.

My Lord,

YOUR *Lordship having signified your Pleasure that the* Sermon *which you heard, when you did us the Honour to be present at the Opening of our Parish Church, should be made publick; notwithstanding my Averseness to print any thing in English; yet out of a just Sense both of that Obedience which I owe to You as my Bishop, and of that Kindness which I have received from you as my Patron, I have now done it, and herewith make bold to present it to You. What Effect a Discourse of this Nature will have upon the Minds of those who shall have so much Patience as to read it,*

I know not. But must leave that to him who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand. My Subject I am sure is good and necessary: And as for my plain and practical way of handling it, it is that which my Text requireth, in that it commandeth that in our Christian Congregations, All things be done to Edifying. *So that unless I had endeavoured to suit it to the Capacities of all there present, and to make it as edifying as I could unto them, my Sermon had been a Contradiction to my Text: And beside that, I had lost my Design in preaching it: Which was, to convince those especially, whose Souls, under your Lordship, are committed to my Care and Conduct, of the* Excellency and Usefulness of the Common-Prayer, *and so to perswade them to the constant and conscientious use of it; not only because it is conformable to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice of the Universal Church, nor only because it is established by the Laws both of our Church and State (though they also be very great Reasons) but likewise because*

of

of that extraordinary Benefit and Advantage which they would receive from it, for the edifying of their Souls in whatſoever is neceſſary to their Eternal Salvation.

I am very ſenſible, that much more might have been ſaid upon this excellent Subject. But intending no more than a plain Sermon upon the occaſion, I was forced to omit many things, and to confine my ſelf to ſuch only, which were moſt obvious, and ſeemed the moſt neceſſary for People to know and practice, in order to their being reconciled unto, and edified by our Publick Prayers. And if upon your peruſal of that little which I have ſaid, you ſhall find any thing not agreeable to the Doctrine of our Church, I humbly ſubmit it to your Lordſhips Judgment and Cenſure; only deſiring that you would be as ready to pardon, as I am to retract it.

My Lord,

I have one Requeſt more to make unto You, which is, that as You was the occaſion of my printing this Sermon, ſo you

would be pleased to accept of it now it is printed: And if, by the Blessing of Almighty God, it may contribute any thing to those great Ends, which You continually prosecute with so great Wisdom and Prudence, with such exemplary Care and Diligence in the Management of that high Office which he hath called you to, even to the Glory of his great Name, the Good of his Church, and the Salvation of the Souls of Men, it is all that is desired by

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Humble

and most Obedient Servant

William Beveridge.

1 *Cor.*

1 Cor. 14. 26.

Let all things be done to edifying.

WHEN *Judas Machabeus* had new built the Altar, and repaired the Temple at *Hierusalem*, after it had been polluted and laid waste for Three Years together; the Church of God at that time and place rejoyced so much at it, that they kept the Dedication of it Eight days, and ordered that the same should be observed every year; 1 *Maccab.* 4. 59. And so we find it was in our Saviour's time: For he himself was pleased to honour that Festival, though only of Ecclesiastical Institution, with his own Presence; *Joh.* 10. 22. In the like manner, we of this Parish have Cause to be transported with Joy and Gladness, and to spend this day in praising and adoring the most high God, for that our Church, which hath lain waste for above five times Three Years, is now at last rebuilt and fitted again for his Worship and Service. For what the Altar and Temple were unto the *Jews* then, the same will our

Church be unto us now. Did they there offer up their Sacrifices unto God as Types of the Death of Chriſt? We ſhall here Commemorate the ſaid Death of Chriſt, typified by thoſe Sacrifices. Did they come from all parts of *Judea* to Worſhip God there? So ſhall we, I hope, come from all parts of this Pariſh to Worſhip God here. Was the Temple an Houſe of Prayer to them? So is this Church to us. Was that the place where God, according to his Promiſe, came unto his People to bleſs them? I do not doubt but he will do the ſame to us in this Place, if we come unto it, and carry our ſelves in it as we ought to do. In ſhort, was the Temple the place where all things were performed that could any way conduce to the edifying of God's People, as things then ſtood? The ſame may be ſaid of our Church, as things now ſtand. For whatſoever is, or can be Neceſſary to the edifying of our Souls here, and ſo to their Eternal Salvation hereafter, is clearly and fully comprehended in thoſe ſeveral Offices, which according to the Laws of the Land, are now to be performed in this place. Neither is there any thing contained in any of them, but what doth really conduce to theſe great Ends and Purpoſes.

But this being a thing which is denied by ſome

ſome, and underſtood but by few amongſt us, I ſhall endeavour to explain and demonſtrate unto all. Which I chuſe to do at this time, becauſe 'tis the moſt proper Subject I could think of for this Occaſion. For unleſs what is to be now done in this place, will anſwer the ends wherefore it is erected, all the Coſts and Charges that have been laid out upon it; will be to no purpoſe at all. But if it can be fully made out, That the Service, which is here to be performed, doth highly conduce to the Advancement of God's Glory and your Happineſs, the great Ends wherefore ſuch places are erected, then you cannot but acknowledge that whatſoever any of you have contributed towards it, is the beſt Mony that you ever ſpent; and that this day wherein the ſaid Service is begun to be performed in it, is one of the moſt joyful days that this Pariſh ever ſaw.

This therefore, is that which I ſhall endeavour to prove at this time: And for that end I have choſen theſe Words for the Ground and Foundation of all that I ſhall ſay upon this Subject, *Let all things be done to Edifying*. For the right underſtanding whereof, we muſt know, that the Apoſtle having in this Chapter diſcourſed at large concerning the way and manner of holding Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and having proved, that whatſoever

soever is there said ought to be spoken in such a Language, that all there present may understand, and so be edified by it; he at last sums up the whole in this Proposition, *How is it then Brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a Psalm, hath a Doctrin, hath a Tongue, hath a Revelation, hath an Interpretation: Let all things be done unto Edifying*: As if he should have said, whatsoever Gifts any of you have, or pretend to, yet when you meet together upon a Religious Account, for the Publick Worship of God, take special care that all things be there done, to the Edifying of all who are there present. From whence it is plain, that the Apostle lays down this as a general Rule, necessary to be observed in all Christian Congregations. So that whensoever we meet together to Worship and Serve God; if any thing be there done which is not for our Edification, we come short of this Rule, and so we do too, if any thing be there wanting that may conduce to that end. For according to this Rule, as nothing is to be there done but what is for our Edifying, so also on the other side, all things that are, or can be for our Edifying ought to be there done.

But for our better understanding the true sense and purport of this Rule, it is necessary to consider what the Apostle here means by *edifying*; For which he must know, That all Christians

Chriſtians being, as the ſame Apoſtle ſaith, *of the Houſhold of God, Built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner-Stone*; Eph. 2. 19, 20. Hence whatſoever tends to the ſtrengthening, ſupporting, cementing, or raiſing this Fabrick higher, whatſoever it is whereby men are made more firm and ſolid Chriſtians, more holy and perfect men than they are before, by that they are ſaid to be *edified*. And therefore, it is a great miſtake for men to think as many do, that they are *edified* by what they hear, meerly becauſe they know perhaps ſome little thing which before they were ignorant of. For *Knowledge* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *puffeth up*, it is *Charity that edifieth*; 2 Cor. 8. 1. And therefore, whatſoever knowledg we attain to, we cannot be ſaid to be *edified* by it, any further than as it influences our Minds, excites our Love, and inclines our Hearts to God and goodneſs. And that this is the true Notion of *edifying*, is plain from the Apoſtles own Words; where he ſaith, *Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouths, but that which is for the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter Grace unto the hearers*; Eph. 4. 29. For from hence it is manifeſted, that that only is properly ſaid to *edifie*, that miniſters grace unto us; whereby we are made more pure and holy than we were before. And therefore, we read of *Edifying our ſelves in love*,

love, Eph. 4. 16. *and building up our ſelves in our moſt holy faith*, Jude 20. which are the true graces that make up a real and true Chriſtian. And nothing can be ſaid to *edifie*, but what tends to the exciting and increaſing of them: *Until we come* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*; Eph. 4. 12, 13. Hence therefore, when the Apoſtle ſaith, *Let all things be done to edifying*, his meaning in brief is this, That in all our Chriſtian Aſſemblies, when we meet together to Worſhip and ſerve God, all things there are to be ſo done, that we may return home wiſer, and better than we came thither; with our Knowledge of God and Chriſt increaſed, our deſires enlarged, our Love inflamed, our Faith confirmed, all our Graces quickned, and ſo our whole Souls made more humble, more holy, more like to God, than they were before.

The Words being thus briefly explained, I ſhall now apply them to our preſent purpoſe, and ſhew that this Form of Religious Worſhip, which is preſcribed by our Church, eſtabliſhed by the Laws of the Land, and therefore to be uſed now in this place, agrees exactly with this Rule, or Canon of the holy Apoſtle, even that *all things in it are done to edifying*.

But

But before we prove that that Form in particular, which our Church hath preſcribed, is agreeable to this Apoſtolical Rule, it is neceſſary to prove firſt, That the preſcribing a Form in general is ſo. For unleſs the preſcribing a Form in general be according to this Rule, no Form in particular, that is preſcribed, can poſſibly agree with it. But now, that this Rule admits, yea, requires the preſcribing of ſome Form, is evident from the Rule it ſelf. For the Apoſtle here commands the Church of *Corinth*, and ſo all Provincial Churches, to take care that in their Religious Aſſemblies *all things be done to edifying*. But how is it poſſible for any Provincial Church to ſee that this be done, except ſhe preſcribes ſome certain Form for the doing of it? If every Miniſter of a Pariſh ſhould be left to his own liberty to do what he pleaſed in his own Congregation, although ſome perhaps might be ſo wiſe and prudent as to obſerve this Rule, as well as they could, yet conſidering the Corruption of Human Nature, we have much cauſe to fear that others would not. At leaſt the Church could be no way ſecured that all would; and therefore muſt needs be obliged to conſider of, and appoint ſome ſuch Form to be uſed in all her Congregations, by which ſhe may be fully aſſured, that this Apoſtolical Rule is every where obſerved, as it ought to be. And although

though we should suppose what can never be expected, that all the Clergy in every Province should be as wise and as good as they ought to be, yet it cannot be supposed that every one of them should understand what is for the Edification of the people as well as all together. And therefore it must needs be acknowledged, that the surest way to have this Rule observed, is, for the Governours of every Church, and the whole Clergy, to meet together by their Representatives, in a Synod or Convocation, and there, upon Mature Deliberation, agree upon some such Form, which they in their Prudence and Consciences judge to be according to this Rule, which the Apostle here lays down before them.

And besides that, the prescribing a Form in general, is more for our *Edifying*, than to leave every one to do what seems good in his own Eyes. We have the concurrent Testimony, Experience, and Practice of the Universal Church. For we never read, or hear of any Church in the World from the Apostles days to ours, but what took this course. Though all have not used the same, yet no Church but have used some Form or other. And therefore, for any Man to say, that it is not lawful, or not expedient, or not so edifying, to use a Form of Prayer in the Publick Worship of God, is to contradict the general sense

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of Chriſtianity, to condemn the Holy Catholick Church; and to make himſelf wiſer than all Chriſtians that ever were before him. Which, whatſoever it may be thought now, was always heretofore reckoned one of the greateſt Sins and Follies that a Man could be guilty of.

Nay, more than all this too: For this is not only to make a Man's ſelf wiſer than all Chriſtians, but wiſer than Chriſt himſelf: For it is impoſſible to preſcribe any Form of Prayer in more Plain and expreſs Terms than he hath done it, where he ſaith; *When ye Pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. *Luke* 11.2. And I hope none here preſent but will acknowledg that Chriſt, by whom alone we can be edified, knows better what is, or what is not for our edification than we or all the Men in the World can do. And therefore, ſeeing he hath not only preſcribed a Form of Prayer for his Diſciples to uſe, but hath expreſly commanded them to uſe it, we, who profeſs our ſelves to be his Diſciples, ought to reſt fully ſatisfied in our Minds, that uſing of a Form of Prayer, is not only lawful, but much more for our edifying, than it is poſſible for any other way of Praying to be.

The ſame may be proved alſo from the nature of the thing it ſelf, by ſuch Arguments, which do not only demonſtrate that it is ſo, but likewiſe ſhew how it comes to be ſo. For,

First,

First, in order to our being edified, so as to be made better and holier, whensoever we meet together upon a Religious account, it is necessary that the same good and holy things be always inculcated and pressed upon us after one and the same manner. For we cannot but all find by our own experience, how difficult it is to fasten any thing that is truly good, either upon our selves or others, and that it is rarely, if ever effected, without frequent repetitions of it. Whatsoever good things we hear only once, or now and then, though perhaps upon the hearing of them, they may swim for a while in our Brains, yet they seldom sink down into our Hearts, so as to move and sway the Affections, as it is necessary they should do, in order to our being edified by them. Whereas, by a Set Form of Publick Devotions rightly Composed, as we are continually put in mind of all things necessary for us to know or do, so that it always is done by the same words and expressions, which by their constant use will imprint the things themselves so firmly in our minds, that it will be no easie matter to obliterate or race them out; but do what we can, they will still occur upon all occasions; which cannot but be very much for our Christian Edification.

Moreover, that which conduceth to the quickning our Souls, and raising up our Affections in our publick Devotions, must needs be-

be acknowledged to conduce much to our Edification. But it is plain, that as to such purposes a Set Form of Prayer is an extraordinary help to us; for if I hear another Pray, and know not before-hand what he will say, I must first listen to what he will say next; then I am to consider, whether what he saith be agreeable to sound Doctrin, and whether it be proper and lawful for me to joyn with him in the Petitions he puts up to God Almighty; and if I think it is so, then I am to do it. But before I can well do that, he is got to another thing: By which means it is very difficult, if not Morally impossible, to joyn with him in every thing so regularly as I ought to do. But by a set Form of Prayer all this trouble is prevented; for having the Form continually in my mind, being thoroughly acquainted with it, fully approving of every thing in it, I have nothing else to do whilst the words are sounding in mine Ears, but to move my Heart and Affections suitable to them, to raise up my desires of those good things which are prayed for, to fix my mind wholly upon God, whilst I am praising of him, and so to employ, quicken, and lift up my whole Soul in performing my Devotions to him. No Man that hath been accustomed to a Set Form for any considerable time, but may easily find this to be true by his own experience: And by consequence, that this way of Praying is a greater

help

help to us, than they can imagine that never made tryal of it.

To this may be also added, that if we hear another praying a Prayer of his own private Composition or voluntary Effusion, our Minds are wholly bound up and confined to his Words and Expressions, and to his Requests and Petitions, be they what they will: so that at the best we can but pray his Prayer. Whereas when we pray by a Form prescribed by the Church, we pray the Prayers of the whole Church we live in, which are common to the Minister and People, to our selves, and to all the Members of the same Church: So that we have all the devout and pious Souls that are in it concurring and joyning with us in them: Which cannot surely but be more effectual for the Edifying not only of our selves in particular, but of the Church in general, than any private Prayer can be.

Lastly, In order to our being edified by our publick Devotions, as it is necessary that we know before-hand what we are to pray for, so it is necessary that we afterwards know what we have prayed for, when we have done: For I suppose you will all grant, that all the good and benefit we can receive from our Prayers, is to be Ultimately resolved into God's gracious Hearing, and answering of them: Without which, they will all come to nothing. But there are two things required

to

to the obtaining an Anſwer of our Prayers: Firſt, that we ſincerely and earneſtly deſire good things at the Hands of God, to which, as I have ſhewn, a ſet Form of Prayer conduceth very much: And then Secondly, it is required alſo, that we truſt and depend upon God for his granting of them, according to the Promiſes which he hath made unto us in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And I verily believe that one great Reaſon why Men pray ſo often to no purpoſe, is, becauſe they do not take this courſe: But when they have done their Prayers, they have done with them, and concern themſelves no more about them, than as if they had never prayed at all. But how can we expect that God ſhould Anſwer our Prayers, when we our ſelves do not mind whether he Anſwers them or no? Nor believe and truſt upon him for it? For certainly truſting on God, as it is one of the higheſt Acts of Religion that we can perform, ſo it is that which gives Life and Vigor, Vertue and efficacy to our Prayers, without which we have no ground at all to expect they ſhould be Anſwered. For God having promiſed to Anſwer our Prayers, except we truſt on him for his performance of ſuch Promiſes, we loſe the benefit of them, and by conſequence our Prayers too. And therefore, as ever we deſire that he ſhould grant us what we pray for, when we have *directed our Prayers to him*,

him, we must still *look up*, Psal. 5. 3. expecting and hoping for the return of them.

Now as this is a thing of greater consequence, so a set Form of Prayer is a greater help to us in it, than it is commonly thought to be. For if we hear another utter a Prayer *ex tempore*, which he never said, nor we heard before, nor ever shall do it again, it is much if he himself can remember the tenth part of what he said: How much less can we that heard him, do it? And if we cannot possibly remember what we prayed for, how is it possible for us to expect it at the Hands of God? or to depend upon him for it? But now it is quite otherwise when we use a Set Form of Prayer. For by this means when we have prayed, we can recollect our selves, look over our Prayers again, either in a Book, or in our minds, where they are Imprinted; we can consider distinctly what we have asked at the Hands of God, and so act our Faith, and Confidence on him, for the granting every Petition we have put up unto him, according to the Promises which he hath made us to that purpose. And as this is the surest way whereby to obtain what we pray for, it must needs be the most *Edifying* way of Praying that we can possibly use.

These things being duly weighed, I shall now it take for granted, That the using a Form

Form in general in the Publick Worſhip of God is agreeable to this Apoſtolical Rule, *Let all things be done to Edifying*; and ſo ſhall proceed to ſhew that that Form in particular, which our Church hath appointed to be uſed upon ſuch Occaſions, is ſo too. For which end it is not neceſſary that I ſhould run through every particular Word, Phraſe, or Expreſſion in the *Common Prayer*, much leſs that I ſhould vindicate and defend it from every little Exception, that Ignorance or Malice may make againſt ſomething in it. For nothing ever yet was, or can be ſaid, or Written, but ſomething or other may be ſaid, or Written againſt it, either well, or ill. But my buſineſs muſt be to prove, That the Form of Divine Service, contained in the Book of *Common Prayer*, which is now uſed in the Church of *England*, conduceth ſo much to the *Edifying* thoſe that uſe it, that it agrees exactly to the Rule which the Apoſtle here preſcribes in that caſe. And this I ſhall demonſtrate from four Heads. 1. *From the Language.* 2. *From the Matter, or Subſtance of it.* 3. *From the Method.* And 4. *From the Manner of Performing it.* For if it be *Edifying* in all theſe Reſpects, it muſt needs be acknowledged to be ſo in the whole. There being nothing in it but what may be reduced to ſome of theſe Heads.

First,

First, Therefore as to the *Language*, you all know that the whole Service is Performed in *English*, the Vulgar and the Common Language of the Nation, which every one understands, and so may be *Edified* by it. And this, indeed, is the Ground and Foundation of all the benefit that we can possibly receive from our Publick Prayers. And therefore in the Church of *Rome*, the Common People are made uncapable of being *Edified* by the Prayers of the Church, in that they are all made in Latin, a Language which they do not understand. So that when they meet to worship God, there are seldom any in the Congregation that knows what is said there, except the Priest that reads it, and oftentimes not he neither. By which means they have no such thing really amongst them as *Common-Prayer*. Neither is it possible for the Common People to be ever edified by by what is there said, or done, except they could be once convinced by it of the horrible abuse which their Church puts upon them, in commanding all her Publick Devotions to be performed in an unknown Tongue, directly contrary, not only to the Rule in my Text, but to the Design of this whole Chapter.

But blessed be God for it, it is not so with us. For ours is truly *Common Prayer*, for it is Written, and Read in that Language which is *common* to all the Congregations in the

the Kingdom, and to every perſon in each Congregation. So that all the People of the Land, whatſoever Rank or Condition they are of, may joyn together in the uſe of every thing that is in it, and ſo be joyntly Edified by it: Eſpecially, conſidering that it is not only all in Engliſh, but in common and plain Engliſh, ſuch as we uſe in our common Diſcourſe with one another. There are no unuſual or obſolete Words, no hard or uncouth Phraſes in it, but every thing is expreſſed as clearly and plainly as Words can do it. So that the meaneſt perſon in the Congregation that underſtands but his Mothers Tongue, may be Edified by it, as well as the greateſt Scholar.

But that which is chiefly to be conſidered in the Language of the *Common-Prayer*, is that it is not only *common*, but *proper* too. Tho' the Words there uſed be all but *common* Words, yet they are ſo uſed that they *properly* expreſs the things that are deſigned by them. This, I confeſs, may ſeem to be no great matter at firſt ſight, yet it is that without which we might be ſubverted, by that which was intended for our Edification. For impropriety of Speech in Matters in Religion, hath given occaſion to all, or moſt of the Schiſms, Errors and Hereſies that ever infeſted, this, or any other Church; as might eaſily be demonſtrated. Hence the

Apoſtle

Apoſtle gave *Timothy*, *A Form of ſound Words*, and charged him to hold it faſt: *Hold faſt* (ſaith he) *the Form of ſound Words which thou haſt heard of me*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. As knowing, that except the Words, whereby he uſually expreſſed Divine Truths, were ſound and proper, it would be impoſſible for his Notions and Opinions of the things themſelves to be ſo. And certainly, if ever there was, *A Form of ſound Words*, compoſed by Men ſince the Apoſtles times, our *Common-Prayer* may juſtly deſerve that Title: It being all made up of ſuch fit and proper, ſuch ſound and wholeſom Words, that if we do but hold faſt to them, there is no fear of our falling, either into Hereſie, or Schiſm. For they, being duly conſidered, will ſuggeſt to our Minds, right, and true apprehenſions of all the Articles of our Chriſtian Religion; and ſo not only make us ſound, but build us up ſtrong and firm in our moſt Holy Faith; So that conſidering the plainneſs and perſpicuity, the ſoundneſs and propriety of Speech which is uſed in it, the leaſt that can be ſaid of the *Common-Prayer*, is, that all things in it are ſo worded, as is moſt for the *edifying* of all thoſe that uſe it.

And as the words in the *Common-Prayer* are all as edifying as Words can be, ſo, in the Second place, Is the *Matter* expreſſed by thoſe Words. For there is nothing in it, but what

what is neceſſary for our Edification, and all things that are, or can be for our Edification, are plainly in it. Firſt, I ſay there is nothing in our Liturgy but what is neceſſary for our Edification. There are no ſuch *Fables* in it, or *Endleſs Genealogies*, which (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *Miniſter Queſtions, rather than Godly Ediſying, which is in Faith*; 1 Tim. 1. 4. There are none of thoſe vain Diſputations and impertinent Controverſies, which have of late been raiſed in the Church, to its great diſturbance, rather than its Edification. There are no new Opinions, no Airy Speculations in it, which ſerve only to tickle Mens Ears, and pleaſe their Fancies, and ſo divert their Thoughts from what they are about. Look it all over without prejudice and partiality, conſider ſeriouſly every thing that is in it, and you will find nothing aſſerted, but what is Conſonant to God's Word, nothing Prayed for, but according to his Promiſe, nothing required as a Duty, but what is agreeable to his Commands, nothing ſaid or done, but what is grave and ſober, ſolemn and ſubſtantial; nothing but what becomes the Worſhip of our Great and Almighty Creator. And therefore, nothing but what we may ſome way or other be *ediſied* by.

And as there is nothing in it, but what is Edifying, ſo all things that are, or can be Edifying are in it. For nothing can be neceſ-

ſary to *Edifie* and make us ſolid and perfect Chriſtians elſe, but what is neceſſary either to be *believed*, or *done*, or *obtained* by us. But there is nothing neceſſary to be *known*, or *believed*, but we are taught it; nothing neceſſary to be *done*, but we are enjoyned in it; nothing neceſſary to be *obtained*, but we pray for it in our Publick Form of Divine Service.

For firſt, As to thoſe things which are neceſſary to be *known*, *or believed*, it is acknowledged by all Proteſtants that they are fully contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, which make a great, if not the greateſt part of our Divine Service; and are conſtantly read over, the Pſalms once every Month, the old Teſtament once, and the New thrice every Year. And all the Fundamental Articles of our Chriſtian Faith, revealed in the Holy Scriptures, being briefly ſummed up in the *Apoſtles Creed*; that we may be ſure to keep them always in our Minds, we have that Creed read and repeated, always once, and moſt commonly twice every day in the Year. And ſeeing the Godhead of our bleſſed Saviour, the Foundation of our whole Religion, hath been, and ſtill is denied by ſome, leſt we ſhould be led away with the Errour of the Wicked, every Sunday, and Holy-day we read the *Nicene Creed*, wherein the Godhead both of the Son and Holy Ghoſt is aſſerted and

and explained. And that we may not entertain any Erroneous Opinions concerning the most Holy Trinity, or the Incarnation of the Son of God, but the true Catholick Faith whole, and undefiled, upon certain days every Year we read that which is commonly called the *Creed of St. Athanasius*, wherein those great Mysteries are unfolded in the most proper and perspicuous terms that they are capable of.

And as all things necessary to be believed are summarily contained in the *Three Creeds*, so they are frequently explained in the other parts of our Liturgy; In so much, that it would be easie to frame a compleat Body of Divinity out of the Words there used: At least of all such things as are needful for any Man in the World to believe or know, in order to his Eternal Salvation.

The same may be said also of all those things, which we ought to do. For, as we here do whatsoever is necessary to be done in order to our Worship of God in this place, so we are here taught whatsoever is necessary to be learnt in order to our serving God in all other places. So that no Man that frequents our Publick Congregations, where the *Common-Prayer* is used, can ever plead Ignorance of any one Duty whatsoever: For if it be not his own fault, he may there be instructed in every thing which he that made him re-

quires of him. For here, as I observed before, we constantly read the Holy Scripture, which, as the Apostle saith, *Is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction, in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly instructed unto all good Works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. And seeing it hath pleased the most high God to Comprise his whole Will, and by consequence our Duty, in the *Ten Commandments*, hence we read them constantly every Sunday and Holyday throughout the whole Year. By which means every one, that doth not willfully shut his Eyes, may clearly see, and fully understand his whole Duty both to God and Man. Especially considering, that in Prayers themselves also there is frequent mention made of all those Vices which ought to be avoided, and of all those Good Works which ought to be performed by us. So that we can never come to Church, but we are still put in mind, both of *what we ought*, and *what we ought not* to do, that we may be saved.

And then, as there is nothing necessary to be *known*, or *done*, but we are taught it; so neither is there any thing necessary to be *obtained* to make us either holy, or happy, but we pray for it in the *Common-Prayer*. For here we have the *Lord's Prayer*, a Prayer composed by Wisdom it self; and therefore it must needs be the most perfect and Divine

Prayer

Prayer that ever was made. Neither do we use it only once, but in every distinct Service of the Church, in our Prayers, before we read the Holy Scripture: And in our Prayers after: Towards the end of the Litany, and in the beginning of the Communion Service, and in every Office of the Church besides. And the Reason is, because although our Saviour hath not forbidden us to use any other Prayer, yet he hath expressly commanded us to say this, whensoever we pray. And therefore, in obedience to his Command, our Church hath wisely ordered, that in all, and every Solemn address that we make to the most high God, we always say this Prayer, lest otherwise, by our transgression of his Command, in omitting this, we make all our other Prayers to be ineffectual. And besides, by the constant use of this amongst our other Prayers, we are always sure to use one Prayer, both absolutely perfect in its self, and most acceptable unto him, to whom we pray; it being a Prayer of his own Composure: So that we speak unto God in his own Words, and so may be confident that we ask nothing of him, but exactly according to his own Will.

And though all things necessary for us, be vertually contained in the Lord's Prayer, yet our Church in Conformity to the Catholick and Apostolical, hath thought good to add

ſome other Prayers in which the ſame things are more particularly expreſſed and deſired at the hands of our great and moſt Bountiful Benefactor. All which are ſo contrived, that there is nothing evil, or hurtful for us, but we pray againſt it; nothing good, or uſeful, but we pray for it. There is no Vice, or Luſt, but we deſire it may be ſubdued under us; no Grace of Vertue, but we pray it may be planted and grow in us. Inſomuch, that if we do but conſtantly and ſincerely pray over all thoſe Prayers, and ſtedfaſtly believe and truſt in God for his anſwering of them, and ſo obtain what we there pray for, we cannot but be as real and true Saints, as happy and bleſſed Creatures, as it is poſſible for us to be in this World. Neither do we here pray for our ſelves only, but according to the Apoſtles Advice, we make *Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of thanks for all Men*; yea, *for our very Enemies*, as our Saviour hath commanded us, *Matt.* 5. 44. And what can be deſired more than all this, to make the Matter of the *Common-Prayer* Edifying either to our ſelves, or others? Nothing certainly, but truth and ſincerity of Heart in the uſing of it.

I cannot paſs from this Head, before I have obſerved one thing more unto you, concerning the Prayers in general, and that is, that they are not carried on in one continued Diſ-

courſe,

courſe, but divided into many ſhort Prayers, or Collects, ſuch as that is which our Lord himſelf Compoſed; and that might be one Reaſon, wherefore our Church ſo ordered it, that ſo ſhe might follow our Lord s Example in it, who beſt knew what kind of Prayers were fitteſt for us to uſe. And indeed, we cannot but all find, by our own experience, how difficult it is to keep our Minds long intent upon any thing, much more upon ſo great things as the Object and Subjects of our Prayers are, but do what we can we are ſtill liable to diſtractions: So that there is a kind of neceſſity to break off ſometimes, to give our ſelves a breathing time, that our Thoughts being looſned for a while, they may with more eaſe and leſs danger of diſtraction, be tied up again, as it is neceſſary they ſhould be all the while that we are actually Praying to the ſupream Being of the World.

Beſides that, in order to the Performing our Devotions aright to the moſt High God, it is neceſſary that our Souls be poſſeſſed all along with due apprehenſions of his greatneſs and glory. To which purpoſe our ſhort Prayers contribute very much: For every one of them beginning with ſome of the Properties or Perfections of God, and ſo ſuggeſting to our Minds right apprehenſions of him at firſt, it is eaſie to preſerve them in our

Minds during the space of a short Prayer, which in a long one would be apt to scatter and vanish away.

But that which I look upon as one of the principal Reasons, why our publick Devotions are, and should be divided into short Collects, is this, Our Blessed Saviour, we know, hath often told us, That whatsoever we ask in his Name, we shall receive: And so hath directed us in all our Prayers to make use of his Name, and to ask nothing but upon the account of his Merit and Mediation for us: upon which, all our hopes and expectations from God do wholly and solely depend. Hence therefore, (as it always was, so) it cannot but be judged necessary, that the Name of Christ be frequently inserted in our Prayers, that so we may lift up our hearts unto him, and Act our Faith upon him for our obtaining the good things we pray for. And so we see it is in the *Common-Prayer*, for whatsoever it is we Ask of God, we presently add, *Through Jesus Christ our Lord*, or something to that purpose. And so ask nothing but according to our Lord's Direction, even in his Name. And this is the reason that makes our Prayers so short; for take away the Conclusion of every Collect or Prayer, *In the Name of Christ*, and you may joyn them all together, and make them but as one continued Prayer. But this would be

be to offer manifeſt violence to the Prayers, by taking away that which gives them all their Force and Energy, and ſo making them ineffectual to the purpoſes for which they are uſed. For certainly the asking all things in the Name of Chriſt, as we do in the *Common-Prayer*, is the only way whereby to obtain what we deſire, and by conſequence, the moſt *Edifying Way* of Praying in the World.

The next thing to be Conſidered in the *Common-Prayer*, is the *Method*, which is admirable, and as *Edifying*, if poſſible, as the *Matter* it ſelf. This none can deny that doth but fully underſtand, and ſeriouſly conſider of it. Which therefore, that you may all do, I ſhall briefly run through the whole, and give you what light I can into it, that you may clearly ſee, not only the Reaſonableneſs, but the Excellency of it all along. For which purpoſe, I ſhall inſtance only in ſuch things which offer themſelves at firſt ſight, to any one that doth but caſt his Eye upon it.

Let us therefore ſuppoſe a Congregation of ſober, and devout Chriſtians (ſuch as we all ſhould be) met together to perform their Publick Devotions to Almighty God; every one of which hath lift up his Heart privately unto him already, imploring his Aid and Aſſiſtance in the Performance of ſo great a Work, and ſo are now already ſet about it. The firſt thing we do, is

read some *Sentences* of Holy Scripture, that so we may begin our Devotions unto God in his own Words. And they are all such *Sentences* as put us in mind of our sins against him, and of his Promise to pardon them if we do repent: That so we may present and carry our selves with that Reverence and Godly Fear before him, as becometh those who are sensible of their own vileness and unworthiness to approach so great a Majesty; And likewise, with that Faith and humble Confidence, which becometh those who believe, that he, upon our Repentance, will pardon our sins, and accept both our Persons, and Performances, according to the Promises which he hath made unto us.

Then follows a grave *Exhortation*, concerning the End of our present Assembling, which is of great use, and ought never to be omitted. For Men generally are apt to rush into the Presence of God, without ever considering what they go about. Whereas, this *Exhortation* puts us upon considering the greatness of the Work which we are now ingaged in, and so upon composing our Thoughts, and preparing our selves for the due performance of it.

Our minds being thus brought into a right frame and temper for it, we all, both Minister and People, prostrate our selves before the most High God, *Confessing* upon our Knees the

the manifold ſins and wickedneſs that we have committed againſt him. Which *Confeſſion* is ſo contrived, that all, and every Perſon in any Congregation whatſoever, may joyn in it. For it runs in general terms. And yet ſo too, that every particular Perſon may, and ought in his own Mind to confeſs, and acknowledge his own ſins, which he knows himſelf to be guilty of. As where we ſay, *We have left undone thoſe things which we ought to have done, and we have done thoſe things which we ought not to have done.* At the ſaying of this, every one ſhould call his own ſins to remembrance, what Duties he knows himſelf to have omitted, and what Vices he knows himſelf to have committed, and confeſs them accordingly to God. And when we have thus confeſſed our ſins unto God, we preſently implore his Mercy in the pardon of them, and his Grace, that for the future we may forſake them.

And whilſt we are thus upon our Knees, humbling confeſſing and bewailing our ſins before the Lord our God, the Miniſter ſtands up, and in the Name of God, declares, and pronounceth to all thoſe who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his Goſpel, *The Abſolution and Remiſſion of all their ſins.* Which though ſpoken alſo in general terms, yet every particular Perſon there preſent, ought to apply it to himſelf, ſo as to be fully re-

swaded in his own mind, that if he doth but sincerely repent, and believe the Gospel, he is perfectly absolved from all his sins by God himself, according to the Promises which he hath made to Mankind in Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now looking upon our selves as *absolved* from our sins, upon our Repentance and Faith in Christ, and by consequence, as reconciled to God, we take the boldness to call him Father, humbly addressing our selves to him in that Divine Form of Prayer which he himself hath given us. Which done, we lift up our Hearts and Voices unto God, for his assistance of us in what we do, in the words of *David*, the Minister crying out, *O Lord open thou our Lips*, and the People answering, *And our Mouths shall shew forth thy Praise*. The Minister again, *O God make speed to save us*, the People, *O Lord make haste to help us*. And then immediately we all lift up our Bodies too, stand upon our Feet, and so put our selves into a posture of Praising and Magnifying the Eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for his infinite Goodness and Mercy towards us; for which purpose the Minister first saith or sings the *Gloria Patri*, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost*; and the People to shew their consent, Answer, *As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World*

World without end, Amen. But not thinking this to be enough, the Miniſter calls upon the People again, ſaying, *Praiſe ye the Lord*, and the People again, *The Lord's Name be praiſed*; and then we go on to praiſe him together, ſaying, or ſinging the Ninety Fifth Pſalm, *Venite exultemus Domino, O come let us ſing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the ſtrength of our Salvation*, &c. And ſo proceed to the Pſalms appointed for the day. After every one of which, to teſtifie our Belief in the moſt Sacred Trinity, and our acknowledgment of that infinite Love and Goodneſs, which every one of thoſe Divine Perſons hath manifeſted to us, we repeat that incomparable Hymn, *Glory be to the Father*, &c.

Our Hearts being thus raiſed up to God in Praiſing and Admiring of him, we are now in a fit temper and diſpoſition to hear what he ſhall ſpeak unto us. And therefore, have a Chapter read out of the *Old Teſtament*; and that in its ordinary courſe, except upon Sundays and Holy-days, when more People attending the Publick Worſhip of God, than can conveniently come upon other days, we read ſome ſelect Chapter proper for the day, and ſuch as is judged moſt edifying to all that are there preſent. And having thus heard God ſpeaking unto us in his Holy Word, we preſently fall upon Praiſing of him again, for

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ſo unſpeakable a mercy, ſaying, or ſinging in the Morning, the *Te Deum*, one of the moſt Heavenly and Seraphick Hymns that was ever Compoſed by Men: Or elſe, the *Song of the Three Children*, which is nothing but a Paraphraſe upon that which *David* ſang ſo often upon Earth, and which the Holy Angels ſing continually in Heaven, even *Hallelujah, Praiſe ye the Lord.* Wherein we being all ſenſible how far ſhort we our ſelves come of Praiſing God ſufficiently, we call upon all the Creatures in the World to do it, *Bleſs ye the Lord, praiſe him and magnifie him for ever.* In the Afternoon, we ſing either the *Magnificat*, or elſe the Ninety Eighth *Pſalm*, both which being taken out of God's own Word, cannot but be very pleaſing and acceptable unto him.

After this, our Souls being got upon the Wing again, and ſoaring aloft in the Contemplation of the Divine Perfections, we are now rightly qualified, to hear and receive the Sublime Myſteries of the Goſpel. And therefore have a Chapter read to us out of the *New Teſtament.* After which we being revived with the good Tidings of the Goſpel, and filled with admiration at the infinite Goodneſs of God therein revealed to us, we break forth again into Praiſing and Adoring of him, in the Song of *Zacharias*, or elſe the Hundredth *Pſalm* in the Morning; and at Even-

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ing, either the Sixty Seventh *Pſalm*, or elſe the Song of Old *Simeon*, ſtill concluding with *Gloria Patri*.

Now having thus heard ſome part of the Word of God read to us, and expreſſed our thankfulneſs unto him for it, to ſignifie our Aſſent, not only to what we have heard, but to the whole Scripture, we all with one Heart and Voice repeat the *Apoſtles Creed*, wherein the Sum and Subſtance of it is contained. And ſo profeſs our ſelves to continue in the Number of Chriſt s Diſciples, and that as we were at firſt Baptized, ſo we ſtill believe in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, God Bleſſed for evermore.

Hitherto we have been moſtly taken up with Confeſſing our ſins to God, imploring his Mercy in the Pardon of them, hearing his moſt Holy Word, acknowledging his Goodneſs to us, and praiſing and magnifying his Name for it. By which means, except we have been extreamly wanting to our ſelves, our Hearts cannot but be ſo united and fixed upon God, that we are now rightly diſpoſed to make known our Wants, and preſent our Petitions before him. This therefore is the next thing we ſet upon: But ſeeing that neither Miniſter nor people can poſſibly do it aright without the Aſſiſtance of God himſelf, therefore each of them firſt pray for his ſpecial Preſence with the other. The one ſaying,

ing, *The Lord be with you*, the other, *And with thy Spirit*. And then immediately falling down upon our Knees, we Adore and Supplicate each Person of the most Blessed Trinity to have mercy upon us, *Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy us*. After which we Address our selves to God in the Words that he hath put into our Mouths, saying the *Lord's Prayer*; which ended, the Minister and People, by turns, lift up their Hearts to God in some short and Heavenly Ejaculations, striving as it were to outvy each other in prevailing with the Almighty to pour down his Blessings upon us. And then, in an humble, and solemn manner, we joyn together in supplicating his Divine Majesty for his Grace and Favour, his Defence and Protection, his Mercy and Blessing, for our selves, for the King, for the Royal Family, for his Church, and for all Mankind. And thus we do ordinarily in the Collects appointed for that purpose. But upon *Wednesdays*, and *Fridays*, (upon which days the Primitive Church used to perform more than their ordinary Devotions) as also upon the *Lord's Day* in the Morning we do it in the *Litany*, and in such a *Litany* as comprehends all, and every thing that we can ever need to desire of Almighty God, either for our selves or others.

After this, upon Sundays and Holy-days, we

we proceed to the *Communion Service:* And therefore, approaching to the Lord's Table, we begin it with his own Prayer. And after another ſhort Prayer to God to cleanſe the Thoughts of our Heart, by the Inſpiration of his Holy Spirit, we read the *Ten Commandments*, which he hath enjoyned us to obſerve; and after every Commandment we ask God Mercy for our Tranſgreſſions thereof, for the time paſt, and Grace to keep the ſame for the time to come; ſaying, *Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* And then, after a Prayer for the King, and the Collect for the day, we read the *Epiſtle* and *Goſpel*, that is, moſt commonly, a ſhort Paragraph taken out of the Canonical Epiſtles, and another out of one of the Holy Goſpels, which was the Ancient way of Reading the Scripture, before it was divided into Chapters. And we do it now to prepare us the better for the Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, therein revealed to us. But ſeeing we neither do, nor can read over the whole, we repeat the ſubſtance of it in the *Nicene Creed*, which it is very neceſſary we ſhould do at this time, that ſo we may demonſtrate our ſelves to be Chriſtians, and ſo capable of receiving the moſt holy Communion.

He that all this while hath employed himſelf as he ought to do in the Service of our Church,

Church, cannot but find himſelf ſtrangely edified by it. Yet howſoever, that nothing may be wanting that may any way conduce to our Edification, after the *Nicene Creed*, our Church hath appointed a *Sermon* to be Preached, which if ſound, plain, and practical, as it ought to be, cannot but be very Edifying too.

And now we may be well ſuppoſed to be ſo far Edified, as to be raiſed up to the higheſt pitch of Devotion that we can arrive at in this World, and ſo are fit to be admitted to the higheſt Ordinance of the Church, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And therefore we now betake our ſelves to it. But that we may not appear before our Lord Empty, we firſt offer up ſomething to him of what he hath beſtowed upon us, to be diſpoſed of to Pious and Charitable uſes; teſtifying thereby our acknowledgment of his Goodneſs to us, and that we have nothing but what we receive from him. And to excite and encourage us to do this, all the while that we are offering, we have ſome ſelect Sentences of Scripture Read to us, wherein God either Commands us to be Charitable, or elſe promiſeth a Bleſſing to thoſe that are ſo. And then we Pray *for Chriſt's whole Church Militant here on Earth*, whereby we profeſs our ſelves to be real Members of it, and deſirous to hold Communion with

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it in Christ's Mystical Body and Blood. And so we proceed to the Celebration of it; in which the *Method* is so clear, so apparently Edifying, that I need not say any thing of it. But shall only observe two things in General concerning it.

First, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, being the highest Mystery in all our Religion, as Representing the Death of the Son of God to us, hence, that place where this Sacrament is Administred, was always made and reputed the highest place in the Church. And therefore also, it was wont to be separated from the rest of the Church by a Skreen of Net-work, in Latine *Cancelli*, and that so generally, that from thence the Place it self is called the *Chancel*. That this was Anciently observed in the Building of all considerable Churches (for I speak not of private Oratories or Chappels) within few Centuries after the Apostles themselves, even in the days of *Constantine* the Great, as well as in all Ages since, I could easily Demonstrate from the Records of those times. But having purposely waved Antiquity hitherto, I am loath to trouble you with it now. But I mention it at present, only because some perhaps may wonder why this should be observed in our Church, rather than in all the other Churches which have been lately built in this City. Whereas, they should rather

rather wonder why it was not obſerved in all other as well as this. For beſides, our Obligations to conform as much as may be to the Practice of the Univerſal Church, and to avoid Novelty and Singularity in all things relating to the Worſhip of God; it cannot be eaſily imagin'd that the Catholick Church in all Ages, and Places for 13 or 1400 years together, ſhould obſerve ſuch a Cuſtom as this, except there were great Reaſons for it.

What they were, it is not neceſſary for us to enquire now. It may be ſufficient to obſerve at preſent, that the Chancel in our Chriſtian Churches, was always looked upon as anſwering to the Holy of Holies in the Temple, which, you know, was ſeparated from the Sanctuary or Body of the Temple, by the Command of God himſelf. And that this place being appropriated to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it ought to be ſo contrived, as may be moſt convenient for thoſe who are to partake of that Bleſſed Ordinance. But it muſt needs be more convenient for thoſe who are to enjoy Communion with Chriſt, and in him with one another, in this holy Sacrament, to meet together, as one Body, in one place ſeparated for that purpoſe, then to be diſperſed, as otherwiſe they would be; ſome in one and ſome in another part of the Church. Or in ſhort, it

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is much better for the Place to be ſeparate, than the People.

Furthermore, It is not only convenient, but in ſome ſenſe neceſſary, for every Communicant to obſerve and take ſpecial notice of the ſeveral Circumſtances which our Lord hath ordained to be uſed in this Sacrament, as the Breaking of the Bread, and the Conſecrating both that and the Wine, to repreſent his Death, the breaking of his Body, and the ſhedding of his Blood for our Sins; that ſo our Hearts may be the more affected with it, and by Conſequence our Souls more edified by it. But this cannot be ſo well done, except there be a Place ſet apart for it, where they may all be placed, about or near to the Communion-Table, and ſo behold what is there done at the Conſecration of the Elements. Hence alſo it is, that the Seats there, are and ought to be ſo ordered, that all that are in them may ſtill look that way, and contemplate upon their Bleſſed Saviour, there evidently ſet forth as Crucified for them.

The other thing that I would obſerve unto you concerning the Holy Communion, is this, that our Church requireth, or at leaſt ſuppoſeth it to be Adminiſtred every Lords-day, and every Holy-day throughout the Year, as it was in the Primitive Church. For that is the Reaſon that the Communion Service is appointed to be uſed upon all ſuch Days,

Days, and to be read at the Communion-Table, that ſo the Miniſter may be there ready to Adminiſter it unto all that deſire to partake of it. Which ſhews the great Care that our Church hath of all her Members, that they might be edified and confirmed in the Faith. To which nothing contributes more than frequent Communion at our Lord's Table. Which if People could once be perſwaded to, they would ſoon find greater Benefit by it, than I can expreſs, or they themſelves, till then, imagine. I ſhall ſay no more of it at preſent, but only this, That I am ſo ſenſible of what I now ſay, that could I be ſure to have a ſufficient Number of Communicants, I ſhould be heartily glad to Adminiſter the holy Sacrament every Lord's Day, both for their ſakes, and my own too.

Thus I have given you a ſhort Scheme of that excellent Method wherein our Divine Service is performed: Which whoſoever rightly conſiders, will need no other Argument to convince him, that it is according to the Apoſtles Rule, very Edifying indeed. The laſt thing to be conſidered in it, is the Manner of its Performance; by which I mean only the ſeveral Poſtures of the Body, as ſtanding and kneeling, which are uſed in it; for they alſo are done to Edifying.

While we ſay or ſing the Hymns and Pſalms

Pſalms to the Praiſe and Glory of God, we ſtand up, not only to ſignifie, but to excite the Elevation of our Minds at that time. For as on the One Hand, if our Souls be really lift up in the Praiſes of God, our Bodies will naturally lift up themſelves, to accompany them as far as they can towards Heaven; ſo on the other Hand, the raiſing up of our Bodies helps towards the raiſing up of Souls too, by putting us in Mind of that high and heavenly Work we are now about; wherein according to our weak Capacities, we joyn with the Quire of Heaven in praiſing God now, as we hope to do it for evermore. For this Cauſe alſo we ſtand at the Creeds, for they being Confeſſions of our Faith in God, as ſuch, they come under the proper Notions of Hymns or Songs of Praiſe to him. All our praiſing God being really nothing elſe but our confeſſing and acknowledging him to be what he is in himſelf and to us. And beſides that, by our ſtanding at the Creeds and Goſpels, we ſignifie our aſſent unto them, and our readineſs to defend them, to the utmoſt of our Power againſt all Oppoſition whatſoever. And as for the Goſpels particularly, they contain the very Acts which our Lord did, and the very words which he ſpake when he was upon the Earth; and therefore we who profeſs him to be our Lord and Maſter, cannot ſurely but ſtand up, when

when we hear him ſpeaking, and liſten diligently to thoſe gracious Words which proceeded out of his Divine Mouth.

And as when we praiſe God, we raiſe up our ſelves as high as we can towards Heaven, ſo when we Pray unto him, we fall down as low as we can towards the Earth, not daring to preſent our Supplications to the abſolute Monarch of the whole World, any other ways than upon our Knees. Which is ſo proper, ſo natural a Poſture for Supplicants, that if all Men would but duly conſider what they do when they pray to Almighty God, the Church need never have commanded them to kneel at that time. For they conld not chuſe but do it: No, not although the Place where they are ſhould ſeem never ſo inconvenient for it. For we find our bleſſed Saviour himſelf kneeling at his Prayer in the Garden, upon the bare Ground, *Luke* 22. 41. and St. *Paul* upon the Sea-ſhore, where he could have no other Cuſhion but Stones or Sand; *Acts* 21. 5. Howſoever, to take off all thoſe little Excuſes that Men are apt to make for themſelves in this Caſe, the Seats in this Church are ſo diſpoſed, and all things ſo prepar'd in them, that there can be no Inconvenience at all in it, but rather all the Conveniences for Kneeling that can be deſired. And therefore if any of you ſhall yet neglect to kneel, while the Prayers are read,

read, they will give us too much cause to call our Religion into Question, or to suspect they have none at all. For if they had, they durst not, they could not offer such a manifest Affront to the great Creator of the World, as to carry themselves no otherwise while they pray to him, than as if they were conversing with their fellow Creatures. But why do I speak of their Praying unto God? It is too much to be feared they do not pray at all nor come to Church for any better Purpose than only to see and be seen. I am sure they perform no Act of External Worship of Adoration unto God, nor shew him that Respect and Reverence which is due unto him; and so give very great Offence to all pious and devout Christians.

Whereas if all and every Person in the Congregation, would always be upon their Knees, while they put up their Petitions to the most high God, what a mighty Advantage would this be, not only to every one in particular, but to the whole Congregation in general? For as every one would by this means keep his Heart more stedfast in the true Fear and Dread of God, and likewise more certainly obtain the good things he prays for, as the Fathers frequently assert: so the whole Congregation also, would be very much edified by it. For by this means we should excite and inflame each others Devotions, con-

firm and ſtrengthen one anothers Faith, and convince both our ſelves and all that ſee us, that Religion is indeed a ſerious thing; and that we believe it to be ſo, by our ſerving God with ſo much Reverence and Godly Fear, as this humble Poſture repreſenteth. And therefore as you tender the Love of God, the Credit of Religion, or the Salvation of your own Souls, I beſeech you all in the Name of him that made you, that whenſoever you come hither to pray unto him, you do it in that awful, lowly, and ſolemn manner, which our Church commandeth, and as becometh Creatures, when you ſpeak to your Great and Almighty Creator; that ſo you may give true Worſhip and Honour unto him, and alſo receive that Benefit and Edification to your ſelves, which he hath promiſed, and you expect from your publick Prayers. This being certainly the moſt edifying Poſture that you can poſſibly uſe upon ſuch Occaſions.

From what hath been hitherto diſcourſed concerning the Language, the Matter, the Method, and the Manner of Performing Divine Service, as contained and preſcribed in the Book of Common-Prayer, we may poſitively conclude, that it agrees exactly with the Rule in my Text, even that, *All things in it are done to Edifying*: Which was the thing I undertook to prove. I know that many

many other Arguments might be brought to shew the Excellency and Usefulness of the Common-Prayer. But these already produced are sufficient to convince any Sober and considering Christian of it. And if there be any here present who are not yet convinced by what they have heard of it, I desire only one thing of them, and that is, That they would but make Trial of it for a while. For my Charity prompts me to believe, that all the Zeal that some express against the Common-Prayer, and all that Indifferency that is in others for it, proceeds only from their Ignorance of what it is, or at least from their want of an experimental Knowledge of it. For let any Man that seriously minds the Worship of God and the Salvation of his Soul, before all things else, let such a one, I say, set himself in good earnest to use the Common-Prayer as he ought to do for some considerable time, and I do not doubt but that by the blessing of God, he will find that Benefit and Edification by it, that his own Experience shall convince him of all that I have now said, more than all the Arguments that I have, or any Man in the World can ever produce to him. Some perhaps may think this to be a Paradox: But I do not question but that many here present can attest it upon their own Knowledge: Having found themselves more

confirmed in their Faith, more ſetled in their Religion, more humbled for their Sins, more ſupported under their Troubles, more enflamed with Love to God and Deſires of Heaven, every way more Edifyed by the conſtant uſe of the Common-Prayer, than they could ever have believed it poſſible to have been, except they had found it to have been ſo by their own Experience.

Now theſe things being thus briefly conſidered, I ſhall obſerve only two things from them. The firſt is the extraordinary Prudence as well as Piety of our firſt Reformers, who firſt compiled the Book of Common-Prayer, ſo exactly Conformable to the Word of God and that Apoſtolical Canon in my Text: which I cannot but aſcribe to the ſame extraordinary aid and aſſiſtance from God, whereby they were afterward inabled to ſuffer Perſecution, yea Martyrdom it ſelf for his Sake, and ſo to confirm what they have done with their own Blood. Which certainly is no ſmall Commendation of it.

The other thing I would obſerve unto you, is the reaſon why the Devil hath had ſuch a ſpight againſt the Common-Prayer, ever ſince it was firſt made. For the more edifying it is to Gods People, the more deſtructive it muſt needs be of the Devils Kingdom. And therefore it is no wonder that he hath all along employed the utmoſt of his Power and Policy

to

to blast its Reputation, and so to discourage and dissuade Men from the use of it And by the Permission of God for the Punishment of this ungrateful Nation, he hath so far prevailed in his Design, that the Liturgy hath been twice cast out of the Church since it was first brought into it, once in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, and then again in the Days of King *Charles* the First.

In the Reign of Queen *Mary*, you all know, who were his Instruments in the doing of it, even the Papists. For they clearly and truly foresaw, that their Erroneous Opinions could never be believed, nor Superstitious Practices observed in the Nation, so long as the Common-Prayer was used. For asmuch as there is nothing in that but what is sound and agreeable to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and so contrary to the groundless Opinions which the Church of *Rome* would obtrude upon the World for Articles of Faith: And besides that, there are many Expressions purposely inserted in it to arm us against the Pope's Supremacy, Indulgences, Invocation of Saints, Transubstantiation, and other Popish Errors; so that it would have been impossible for the Romish Religion to be ever restored in the Nation, unless the Common-Prayer was first removed. Which therefore they took Care to have done as soon as possible. But within a few Years after,

the firſt of Queen *Elizabeth*, it was brought in again. And as the Reformation was begun before, ſo from that time forward it was carried on and perfected chiefly by the means of Common-Prayer. For it is very obſervable that in the Reign of King *Edward* the Sixth, and for ſeveral Years too of Queen *Elizabeth*, there was little or no Preaching in moſt Parts of the Kingdom, and few then could read Engliſh, and yet by the conſtant and general uſe of the Liturgy, and Gods Bleſſing upon it, the whole Nation was ſo edified in the True Religion, that there was ſcarce one in an hundred but forſook and abhorred all Popiſh Doctrines and Superſtitions: Which is an undeniable Argument, that in this Reſpect alſo it is as edifying, as it is poſſible for a thing of that Nature to be. In ſo much that ſo long as the Common-Prayer is uſed and frequented as it ought to be, it is morally impoſſible for Popery to get any Ground amongſt us. But if this Bulwark was once removed (which God forbid) our grand Adverſary would ſoon accompliſh his malicious Deſigns upon us, one way or other.

This he knows well enough; and therefore hath left no Stone unturned to effect it. But what he hath done before by the Papiſts, he afterwards brought about again by other means in the Reign of King *Charles* the Firſt.

For

For by what kind of Spirit the Common-Prayer was then caſt out you all know, and ſome of you found by woful Experience. All that I ſhall ſay of it, is only this, that the ſame Spirit that then ſtirred up People ſo violently againſt the Common-Prayer, ſtir'd them up at the ſame time to rebel againſt their King, to take away Men's Eſtates and Lives contrary to all Law and Juſtice; and at laſt to murther one of the moſt pious Princes that ever lived. And whether that was the Spirit of Chriſt or Antichriſt, God or the Devil, judge you. Be ſure the Conſequents of its being laid aſide at that Time were very ſad. For People being deprived of that whereby they ſhould have been edified, were immediately toſſed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, until at length many of them fell into the moſt pernicious and damnable Hereſies that were ever heard of in the Church. Yea together with the Liturgy, they laid aſide all Diſtinction betwixt ſacred and common things; by which means the whole Nation was in danger of being overſpread with Profaneneſs and Irreligion.

But bleſſed be the Name of the moſt high God for it, he was once more pleaſed to appear for us, and in a miraculous manner to reſtore our Common-Prayer to his Church, together with our Gracious Soveraign to his Kingdoms. But what ſhall we render to the

Lord

Lord for so great a Blessing as this is? All that he expects, or we can give him for it, is only to make the best use of it that we can. This therefore is that which I now pray and beseech you all for the future to do. Do not think it enough to be for the Common-Prayer, and to come now and then to hear it. This you may do, as many do, and yet receive no more Benefit by it; than as if there were none at all to be received. Which therefore can by no means be imputed to the Common Prayer, its self, but to the Negligence of those that use it. Neither must you think it enough to talk high for it, or to rail at those who are not so happy as to be rightly informed about it. But rather take all Opportunities to inform them, and by all means possible to convince them of the Excellency and Usefulness of it. Which you can never do so effectually, as by your out-stripping and exceeding them in Vertue and Good Works. For this is and ever will be a plain Demonstration that the Common-Prayer is indeed far more edifying, than those New Modes of Religion, which they are so unhappily seduced into. That therefore you may do this, and so both experience in your selves and demonstrate unto others the Truth and Certainty of what you have now heard, concerning the Common-Prayer, I desire you to observe these few Rules in the using of it.

First,

First, Come not to our Publick Prayers only out of Custom or for Fashion sake, as the manner of some is, but out of a sincere Obedience to Gods Commands, and with a sure Trust and Confidence in his Promises for his Blessing upon what you do. For which end it will be very good as you go to Church, to bethink your selves whither you are going, and what you are to do there, that so laying aside all other Business, you may put your selves into a right Temper for so great a Work.

Secondly, Frequent our Publick Prayers as often as you can. The oftner you are at them, the better you will like them, and the more edified you will be by them. And therefore do not satisfie your selves with hearing them once a Week. In this City, as also in many other places of the Kingdom, especially where there are Cathedrals or Collegiate Churches, you may enjoy the benefit of them publickly every Day, and so keep your Hearts continually in an holy and heavenly Frame, and always live as becometh Christians: And if you neglect such Opportunities as are now put into your Hands, you will one Day wish you had not; but then Wishing will do no good.

Thirdly, If possible, come always at the beginning of Divine Service. Otherwise you will certainly miss of something that would have been edifying to you, and perhaps

haps of that, which at that time might have done you more good than all the reſt. Neither will you loſe the Benefit only of part of it, but in ſome Meaſure of the whole too. All the parts of it being linked together in ſo excellent a manner and Method, that they influence and aſſiſt each other. So that nothing can be omitted either by Miniſter or People, but the whole will ſuffer by it, and loſe ſomething of that Vertue and Efficacy, which otherwiſe you would find in it.

Fourthly, All the while that you are in Gods Houſe, carry your ſelf as in his ſpecial Preſence, and ſuitably to the Work you are about; ſtanding while you praiſe God, and kneeling when you pray unto him, as our Church hath directed you. For though theſe may ſeem but little things in themſelves, yet they are of great Conſequence, both to our Worſhipping of God aright, and to our being edified by what we do, as I have ſhewed before.

Laſtly, Take ſpecial care all along to keep your Minds intent upon the Matter in hand, When you confeſs your Sins to God, do it with an hearty and ſincere Repentance for all the Errors of your Life paſt. When the Abſolution is pronounced, receive it with a firm and ſtedfaſt Faith in Chriſt our Saviour. When you repeat or ſing the Hymns and Pſalms, raiſe up your Spirits as high as you can

can to joyn with those above in praising and magnifying the Eternal God. When the Word of God is read, hearken diligently unto it, and consider seriously what he that made you saith to you, and requireth of you, and resolve by his Blessing to believe and live accordingly. And all the while that you are upon your Knees, putting up your Petitions to the most high God, let your whole Souls be employed in it, earnestly desiring the good things you pray for at his Gracious Hands, and humbly confiding on his faithful Promises for the granting of them. By this means you will perform reasonable Service unto God, and by consequence that which will be very acceptable unto him, and as profitable and edifying to your selves. Whereas they that do not observe this Rule, cannot be properly said to pray, or serve God at all. And therefore it is no Wonder that they come to Church, and hear the Common-Prayer read, and yet are no way edified by it. Indeed it is impossible that they should. For as much as all the Benefit and Edification that we can possibly receive from any of our Devotions, depends very much upon the due Intention of our Minds in the Performance of them. To which, as I have shewn, both a Form of Prayer in general, and ours in particular, is a very great help.

Do but observe these plain and necessary Rules in using of the Common-Prayer (without which you cannot be truly said to use, but rather to abuse it) and you will soon find what I have said about it to be true, even that *All things in it are done to Edifying*. And therefore I would to God that not only you that hear me at this time, but all the People of the Nation, could be once perswaded to do so. What an holy Nation, what a peculiar People should we then become? How pious towards

wards God? How loyal to our Soveraign? How Just and Charitable to one another? For by our constant Worshipping Almighty God in so solemn and devout a manner as this is, our Hearts would be over-awed with so great a Fear of his Divine Majesty, that we should never dare willingly to offend him. Our Mind would be filled and impregnated with such a Sense of his Power and Soveraignty, that we should honour and reverence it in those also whom he hath set over us. Our whole Souls would be raised up so much above the World, that we should not do an ill Act to gain it wholly to our selves. In short, we should be every Day edified more and more in Faith, in Love, in Humility, in Self-denial, in Temperance, in Patience, in all true Grace and Vertue: And so we should go from Strength to Strength, from one degree of Grace unto another, until at length we arrive at Glory and Perfection in the highest Heavens, where we shall spend Eternity it self in praising and adoring the most high God; as for all the other Mercies which he hath vouchsafed to us, so in a particular Manner for our being Members of such an Apostolical Church, wherein all things are done to edifying.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant we may all do in and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, World without End. *Amen.*

FINIS.